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Letter dated 19 December 2003 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council

I write with reference to the letter dated 11 December 2003 from the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Immigration of Papua New Guinea, the Honourable Sir Rabbie L. Namaliu, addressed to me regarding developments in Bougainville and the request of his Government for a continued United Nations political presence on the island.

As is evident from the letter and the Council's consideration of the matter on 15 December 2003, the peace process in Bougainville continues to make slow but steady progress. In this connection, the United Nations Political Office in Bougainville (UNPOB), the mandate of which expires on 31 December 2003, has played a significant role. However, the process has not yet reached its logical conclusion, that is, the establishment of an autonomous government. In the light of this, and in accordance with the request of the Government of Papua New Guinea, supported also by the Bougainville parties, I intend, with the concurrence of the Council, to establish a small, follow-on United Nations Observer Mission in Bougainville (UNOMB) with the following functions:

(a) Chair the Peace Process Consultative Committee, which will consult with the parties on the peace process in general, and make preparations for elections, in particular;

(b) Report on the security and the subsequent destruction of the contained weapons;

(c) Monitor the constitutional process leading to the adoption of the Bougainville Constitution;

(d) In accordance with the amended Constitution of Papua New Guinea, and if requested by any of the parties, verify and certify substantial compliance by the parties in the hand ng in of weapons and whether the level of security is conducive to the holding of elections;

(e) Perform other good offices, as appropriate, or when requested to do so by the parties.

Given the strong commitment of the Government of Papua New Guinea and the Bougainville leaders to the Peace Agreement, UNOMB should finish the residual tasks of UNPOB and support the efforts of the parties in the transitional period leading to the elections. The Observer Mission, comprising a Head of

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Mission, one political adviser and two support staff, would be established for a six-month period. Its staffing structure and a modified mandate are expected to result in substantial savings of resources, compared to UNPOB.

(*Signed*) Kofi A. **Annan**